

How a Laborer Found a Lost Temple of Old Rome

A LABORER walking on the tracks of the Rome-Naples Railway fell into a hole. The accident happened just outside the Porta Maggiore, best known of the gates of Rome. After he scrambled to his feet he discovered that he had fallen into the courtyard of an ancient temple which evidently was built by Taurus and had been forgotten by all succeeding generations.

The laborer looked about him in the subterranean darkness. He found a long passage and followed it, thinking he could find an exit. He came to the ruins of a great building. He struck matches and peered about the walls. All was curious to him, but he recognized the appearance of a temple.

The laborer reported to his foreman. A hole in the ground in Rome always is worth investigating. They went together, and after the engineer had seen for himself he excitedly rushed to the headquarters of the archaeological authorities of Rome, and excavation work was begun on the spot within a fortnight.

The official report of the explorations has just been published. The forgotten ruins proved to be of a Greek temple, dedicated to an unknown deity, gleaming with bas reliefs in white stucco, which reveal a lost art. A lost temple, a lost deity, a lost

*Secret Villa Built by Taurus as Retreat
From Vengeance of Nero's Mother.
Sought for Centuries, Believed
to Be Found at Last Under
the City Gates by Workman
Who Just Fell Into a Hole*



How the delicate work of excavating on archaeological discoveries in Rome, "where every hole leads to some new link with the past"—is done. The earth is carried away in baskets by women after being scooped up with hand spades.



Above and at the left are two panels of reliefs still intact in the ancient temple. The artist is forgotten, but his work reveals an art new even in its antiquity. At right is an ancient statue of Agrippina, whose desire for revenge was responsible for the retreat of Taurus to his underground villa.

doubt that the temple was an underground one, for it is fourteen feet below the level of the ancient road unearthed in the neighborhood. Aside from its historical interest the basilica contains the most superb stucco bas reliefs known to exist. They are pure white and, in spite of their delicacy, almost perfectly preserved—as described by Miss Franklin. The entire surface of walls and ceilings is divided by moldings into panels. Mythological scenes alternate with decorative motifs of victories crowning trophies, winged genii, gorgon heads and palmettes.

The antechamber differs from the main room in that it is decorated in dark red and blue, with pictures of Bacchic revelry. One relief shows the mad Agave with the head of Pentheus, the subject of the Bacchae of Euripides.

In the vault of the nave is pictured a winged genius carrying off Ganymede to be the cupbearer of Jupiter, and another

genius bearing away a female figure thought to represent one of the daughters of Leucippus. Some of the scenes are done in a spirit of humor. There is a picture of Jason, who is made so small that he has to climb on a table to reach the Golden Fleece while a Broddingnagian Media gives a magic potion to the dragon.

The most magnificent work is that in the half dome of the apse. It shows a woman clad in a long garment which floats out behind her in the wind as she leaps down from the rocks into the sea. In one hand she holds the seven stringed lyre. A winged Eros assists her, and in the sea a figure holds a scarf as if to break her fall. A scaly tailed Triton rises from the water. At the left an Apollo with a bow stands on a cliff and behind him sits a veiled figure in an attitude of lamentation. The scene is believed to represent the poetess Sappho leaping from the Leucadian cliff to escape her love for the boatman Phaon.

Seen in the mysterious light entering through the antechamber the reliefs have a fairy like quality. They possess not only motion but rhythm, and are done in a spirit of delicate fantasy.

There evidently was an altar or throne before the apse, and under the floor beneath were found the bones of a pig and dog. Bones of other animals were discovered under the floor of the antechamber, so it is evident that sacrifice of animals was a frequent ceremony. Since the decoration is purely Greek in style and shows no trace of Oriental or early Christian influence it is thought that the cult was that of the Neo-Pythagoreans, a Greco-Italian sect. Belief in immortality is suggested by some of the frescoes, which represent spirits carrying off the soul to another life.

It is not of course authentically proved that the victim of Agrippina built this temple that he might practice his rites without being discovered. But little doubt remains. Taurus might have sealed up the entrance to the temple as soon as he felt Agrippina's envious eye on his gardens. In any case nearly 2,000 years of wars have been waged on the plains above without any intrusion into the ancient solitude of this mystic retreat.

This discovery has recalled to the minds of archaeologists throughout the world any number of vague traditions of the existence of similar hidden villas and temples in the vicinity of the old capital of the Neros and the Caesars. Tacitus has written of a temple building of Nero himself, wherein he worshiped in secret a strange deity. All record of the characteristics and the influences of this unknown god have been lost, and yet Tacitus records that this deity was the patron of a large cult made up principally of Nero's most favored courtiers.

In another ancient writing there is a description of a weird ceremony practiced throughout the first century in Rome, to which, the author says, many of the most powerful nobles gave recognition. From the hardly understandable description of this ceremony some modern historians have concluded that it was the prototype of the obnoxious Black Mass, attention to which was called in France by the escapades of Mme. de Maintenon.

Some place in this Rome of the first century there was a temple dedicated to this peculiar ceremony. All trace of this temple has been lost, however, and it is wondered if some day it will not be discovered, much the same as has this temple supposed to have been built by Taurus. As said above, every hole in Rome may be regarded with awe. No laborer or other pedestrian stumbling into an opening in the ground knows but that, upon scrambling to his feet, he may not see around him some hitherto unknown record in marble of the magnificence of a Nero or a Caesar.

the fashionable residence district of first century Roman society. Here the nobles had villas and gardens.

Taurus knew Agrippina; he knew her cruelty; he knew after he was condemned that she would devise most terrible tor-

tures for him. Therefore he committed suicide rather than submit to the suffering which he accounted inevitable unless death should intervene.

Now the underground basilica was unearthed in exactly the spot where the unfortunate Taurus had his gardens. There is every possibility, according to the archaeologists, that the story told by Tacitus was true, and that Taurus celebrated his foreign rites—believed to have been

some form of sun worship—in this lovely white temple sunk below the olive and lemon trees of his garden. There is no

Will Cherokees Shatter Legend of Swift's Treasure?

THE mysterious visit of a party of Cherokee Indians from Oklahoma to Wolfe county, in the hills of southeastern Kentucky, recently has revived speculation and interest with regard to the lost silver mine of John Swift.

It has revived the old belief among the people who live in that section of the State that the Cherokees have a traditional secret—handed down from generation to generation since 140 years ago. It was 140 years ago that Swift was killed by a party of Indians, who took the crude maps and charts of his discoveries from his body.

The Indian party, which set out little more than a month ago on the search, is for the time being lost in the hills. Nothing has been heard of them since they left the town of Greenup, having given the natives of that section cause for furtive but nevertheless high excitement by hinting of the nature of their quest and by inadvertently displaying curious looking old parchments, which looked a great deal like maps of some primitive mountainous district.

The tale of John Swift's silver mine has become a sort of folk legend in the households of the Kentucky hills. For a hundred years mothers have told the story to their children, and visitors to the section which John Swift is thought to have explored have never departed from it without hearing in infinite detail the narrative of Swift's journey, of his discovery, of his death at the hands of Indians and of the loss of the silver mine's location.

Some have looked upon the story as pure legend without other foundation than the combined imaginations of a romantic people; others have taken the story so seriously that they have given their lives to the search for the mine, while each one hopes that some day while spading in the

back yard or plowing in the garden he will turn up the lost treasure source.

But unquestionably the story is founded upon fact.

Years after John Swift had died, long after the silver ore was known to have been discovered by him, people from all parts of the country began going to Kentucky to search for the mine. The descendants of these adventurers live in the Kentucky hills today; and still they search hopefully, although their fathers and their grandfathers and their great-grandfathers combed the hills fruitlessly in the same quest.

There is much evidence that truth is the foundation of the Swift legend. An old history of Kentucky, long out of print, contains the following paragraphs:

"Swift's silver mine has been located by tradition in different counties of eastern Kentucky, from Bell county in the south to Carter in the north.

"John Swift of North Carolina and some companions made a number of trips into Kentucky, between the years 1761 and 1769, and upon their return home usually brought a good supply of silver, which they claimed to have found in the mountains of Kentucky."

This version is borne out by the Greenup Independent, a newspaper of a date in February, 1873, which says:

"When Swift was driven from the silver mines in Kentucky by the approach of hostile Indians, he returned to his home in North Carolina. The money which he had with him created suspicions among his neighbors and he was arrested as a counterfeiter. In those days there existed no mint in the United States and the only test of the circulating money was the purity of the metal. Upon the trial of the case against Swift it was proven that the coins in his possession were pure silver, and the charges were dismissed.

"The ancient tools and instruments used for coining money, which fell from a cliff in Carter county, were seen and examined by men now living. These men are highly respectable and entitled to full credit, and they vouch for the truth of the statement. One of the first settlers of the county found near his cabin a quantity of cinder of such unusual color and weight as to induce him to have it tested by an expert. This was done and the result was a considerable amount of pure silver, which at his instance was converted into spoons; these spoons are still in possession of the family.

"Several years ago, a couple of Indians from the West, visited Carter county and acted in such a manner as to excite the attention of the citizens. They remained for a considerable time and were continually wandering over the mountains and making minute examinations of the country along the small streams. When about to leave they told an old gentleman, with whom they stayed, that they were in search of a silver mine which the traditions of their tribe located in that section of Kentucky; but they were unable to find it, owing to the changed condition of the country."

It is a fact that about thirty years ago another party of Indians—Cherokees, and beyond doubt progenitors of those at the present moment in the hills of Wolfe county—came, bringing maps. Moreover, they are said by men who lived then and who are still alive to have discovered a chest of silver coins. Hence it is the general belief now that the mine is in Wolfe county.

The Greenup Independent's report continues: "At an early day, silver money was in circulation in the settlement of what is now West Virginia said to have been made by Swift. It was free from alloy, and of

such a description as to indicate that it had not passed through an established mint.

"A bar of pure silver was found some years ago near a small mill in Carter county which was thought to have been smelted from ore obtained from silver mines said to exist in that country. And within the past few days a piece of ore, which has every appearance of silver ore, and a small quantity of metal which is said to be silver, was shown by a gentleman of undoubted veracity, who testifies that he got the ore in the mountains of Kentucky, and with his own hands smelted the metal from ore he obtained in the mountains."

Yet, convincing as that is, there is more convincing evidence. From the papers of the late Wood C. Dollins of Mt. Sterling, Ky., are taken the following extracts:

"A memorandum of John Swift's journal has fallen into our hands, which is an exceedingly curious document. It describes with some minuteness the journeys of 1761-2-4-7-8-9, and alludes to three other trips of which he kept no account. This is a part of Swift's journal: 'On the 1st of September, 1769, we left between 22,000 and 30,000 dollars and crowns on large creek running near a South course. Close to the spot we marked our names (Swift, Jefferson, Munday and others) on a beech tree—with compass, square and trowel. No great distance from this place we left 15,000 coins of the same kind, marking three or four trees with markers. Not far from these we left the prize, near a forked white oak, and about three feet underground, and laid two long stones across it, marking several stones close about it. At the forks of Sandy, close by the fork, is a small rock, has a spring in one end of it. Between it and a small branch, we hid a prize under the ground; it was valued at 6,000 dollars. We likewise left 3,000 dollars buried in rocks of the rockhouse.'"